

# Bay of Plenty Times

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## DRUG RAID EXPLOSIONS

■ Police and AOS storm suspected P lab      ■ Building on the property explodes      ■ Toxic smoke blankets the neighbourhood



YOUNG PEOPLES' RESIDENCE: Police take away three people for questioning after a drug raid at a Katikati property.

PHOTO/SUPPLIED

### Residents told to remain indoors

By Genevieve Helliwell  
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An industrial building burst into flames after armed police conducted a drug raid on a suspected P lab in Katikati.

About two dozen police, including the Armed Offenders Squad (AOS), stormed into Katikati shortly before a series of loud explosions were heard coming from a residential housing block on Park Rd yesterday.

Neighbours were told to keep indoors while police swarmed around an industrial building, the former King Cat factory.

Residents said a group of young people had been living in the building.

Not long after police arrived at the scene, the industrial-sized shed caught alight and a series of loud explosions echoed across the town. Bright orange flames leaped out from the shed and thick, black smoke billowed out of the roof, leaving a lingering, sickly smell.

One neighbour, who did not want to be named, said AOS members drove on to her backyard about 11am.

"We heard dogs barking and people yelling so I thought it was a fight or something, then I went outside and saw all these armed offenders guys with their guns."

The woman said a member of the AOS team warned her and her family to stay indoors as the shed contained volatile chemicals. She said she was told by an officer that the building was a suspected P lab.

From inside the house, the woman's daughter watched the AOS members, dressed from head to toe in black, surround the shed and order its occupants out.

"They said 'we won't hurt you if you come out with your hands over your head' then no one came out so they went in and came back out with three people and tied them to a fence," the daughter said.

"And then it exploded. I don't know if it was planned; we asked but they wouldn't say anything."

"If it wasn't [planned] they were



SICKLY SMELL: Flames engulf the property in Katikati.

PHOTO/SUPPLIED

■ Continued A2

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